

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Focus school lunch debate on kids, not Congressmen

Like many components of the Republican "Contract With America," much has been said and written about a proposal to change the school lunch program, but little of it has been complete or accurate. To their credit, food service directors in the Dallas and Lake-Lehman school districts refrained from taking baseless potshots at the proposal when interviewed for an article last week, preferring to wait and see what shape any changes finally take.

More than 1,000 Lake-Lehman and Dallas students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, with the highest percentage at Ross and Lake-Noxen schools. Not all eligible students take advantage of the program, but more than half appear to do so. Fear of being stigmatized may prevent some from applying, although both districts attempt to conceal the identity of recipients.

There has been no real argument against subsidizing school lunches; the present discussion is about how to pay for them in the most effective and efficient way. Republican members of the House of Representatives are in one corner, claiming that giving the money to states in the form of block grants would put a greater share in the hands of needful recipients instead of Washington bureaucrats. They would combine all nutrition programs into one grant and give states leeway in distributing it where it is most needed. Many Democrats counter by pointing out that after an initial guaranteed annual increase, there is no assurance that funds will be available for this program, or that states won't misuse the funds. Others, including Lake-Lehman food service director Joyce Coolbaugh, fear that block grants will limit flexibility to respond to hard times or natural disasters, when more people may need assistance or food prices skyrocket.

One thing is certain — the present level of funding is generous, with school districts receiving \$1.81 for each free lunch served, which is 56¢ more than Lehman's regular lunch price and 41¢ more than Dallas's. If there are genuine savings to be found without jeopardizing the program's availability to all who qualify, it's worth looking for them. If however, the Contract's proposal is simply a way to shift the burden from the federal to state, or even local, level, it won't really save anything except a Congressman's skin, and that only temporarily.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Splat! That was the sound of egg striking my face after last week's gaffe of leaving out the continuation — or "jump" as we say in the business — of the front page article about the Oak Hill Water Company. We still paste up our pages the old-fashioned way, with wax and knives, and sometimes we goof. I can't ever remember this big an error though. Actually, we had a spot planned for the jump, but wanted to get a particular photo in. So, I said, "Put this picture here, and I'll take the jump somewhere else." Is short-term memory lapse something I should be concerned about? Fortunately, we had already planned a follow-up story for this issue, and it contains the material left out last week. And it's all there, I promise.

The U.S. Post Office is considering the greatest change in its regulations in decades, ostensibly to simplify a complex system of categorizing mail. There have been many classes of mail for years, and sub-classes as well, with a bewildering rate structure. Newspapers with paid circulation are in second-class, which implies one step below first-class mail. From the department's earliest beginnings, second-class has enjoyed low rates because the government intended to make it easy for newspapers to survive. Even though 18th century politicians had little use for the excesses of the press, they understood that a thriving free press was the best defense against tyranny. But times have changed. The Post Office is now a "quasi-public" agency, charged with overcoming massive losses, and competitors from Federal Express (which has nothing to do with the federal government) to electronic mail are chomping off large parts of business. To make up for the losses, the reclassification proposal caters to large-volume third-class mailers, the ones who flood your mailbox with junk each day. Smaller mailers, like newspapers and many magazines, face a proposed 17 percent rate hike, in part to offset projected 14 percent lower rates for big mailers.

For now, the higher rates would apply only to subscriptions sent out of a paper's home county, which in our case aren't very many. Still, we will need to raise prices on those papers if and when the increases become law.

Do you agree? Disagree?

Editorials are the opinion of the management of The Dallas Post. We welcome your opinion on contemporary issues in the form of letters to the editor. If you don't write, the community may never hear a contrasting point of view. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Please include your name, address and a daytime phone number so that we may verify authenticity. We do not publish anonymous letters, but will consider withholding the name in exceptional circumstances. We reserve the right to edit for length and grammar.

The Dallas Post

Published Weekly by Bartsen Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
Telephone: 717-675-5211

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MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION
AND PENNSYLVANIA NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER'S ASSOCIATION
VOTED 3rd BEST SMALL WEEKLY IN THE U.S., 1993



Harveys Lake, circa 1907

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

Someone once said that columnists make more money than editors. Could be. Doubt it. At least they might have if they were in the top six back fifty years ago. Here, for instance are incomes from six tax returns back then (without radio, magazine or book money)...surely not like today:

Walter Winchell: \$74,202.57
Walter Lippman: \$62,476.20
Arthur (Bugs) Baer: \$53,000.00
Westbrook Pegler: \$46,263.06
Heywood Brown: \$36,260.00
Mark Hellinger: \$19,627.05

Now after seeing the above, if you still want to be a columnist, then I will help you. First you have to learn what a column is made of, not just 600 words or so. Good columns have three parts: first, an attention-grabbing "opener" which states your theme, second, a "middle" which repeats and develops your theme, and third, a "closer," your final remark which wraps everything up and should be clever enough to remain in one's memory long after the column itself is forgotten.

J.W.J.



John W. Johnson

It's the spring of 1995, and Michael Jordan is back...something "to die for" to some basketball fans. A white "Banlon" shirt and Beatle Boots. That was the sum total of having "something to die for" in 1965. Back then, it was an expression. The sad truth today is that there are young people literally being killed over other status symbols; specifically, so-called "starter jackets" and several brands of sneakers. The vast majority of those losing their lives over these products are inner city black youths seeking to own these \$175 sneakers or \$100 jackets as a symbol of having arrived. It is a tortured value system which, fed by the advertisers, causes the values to be skewed. Most guilty in this nonsense are the advertisers who pitch these outrageously priced sneakers to kids who can't afford them. And it is the height of hypocrisy for men like black filmmaker Spike Lee (alias Morris Blackman in the Air Jordan Nike ads) to pitch these shoes to kids, and at the same time scream at white America about exploitation of blacks.

The problem is not the advertising of luxury items; BMW, for example, is an expensive automobile; however, it is not pitched to an audience which cannot afford the product. The sneaker makers are selling the American dream to kids who cannot afford to buy it. The result is that these kids are literally killing one another to own these status symbols. But those kids are mostly black, right? Yeah....

It's time to change the terms of

Want to become a good columnist? Here's how

Westbrook Pegler, a supreme craftsman at columning and long ago my special favorite, in spite of his vicious attacks on the Roosevelts, called closers "get-em-off" lines and he prided himself on his own. He said, "I am a great closer, and some will testify that I have written some very historic get-em-off lines." Some of his columns were meticulously-written pieces intended only to build up to his closers.

But Pegler is long gone and I needed new hero, more contemporary. Got one. A Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group and a contributing editor for Newsweek...George F. Will in person. You know him from "This Week with David Brinkley" but he has also written nine books, the ninth being "The Leveling Wind." Mr. Will is a closer without peer, perhaps no, not perhaps - even better than Pegler. On page 56 of that ninth book is an example of a closer that is as near to being perfect as one can get. The other few paragraphs quoted (by permission, of 'cuss') show off Will's virtuosity and you beginning columnists would do no better than to study him. Assiduously.

In the column "I Hear American Bullets Singing," Will reviews recent events from New York City news reports, such as the 10-

month-old Bronx boy who was shot in a walker, the three-year-old Brooklyn boy killed when gunman fired 18 rounds from semi-automatic weapons through a steel-covered door as he slept, the Bronx teenager whose car was sprayed with bullets from a rooftop, the one-year-old wounded after his dad was shot dead and the nine-year-old, shot while asleep in a car. Then:

"Last week America's patience snapped. With a single voice the nation thundered 'Intolerable!' We are a people slow to anger but fierce when galvanized, as by Pearl Harbor, or, as last week, by Roseanne Barr's rendition of 'The Star Spangled Banner.' The President weighed in, wasn't pleased.

"Ms. Barr is a star and a slob. She is a star because the country has a robust appetite for slob TV, the theme of his is: Crude is cute. Up to a point. There are limits.

"Of course the national anthem is hard to sing, even when you are trying, as Barr was not, to do it right. That is why some people want to replace it with 'America the Beautiful.' Trouble is, one verse of it says about America the Beautiful:

"Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears!!
"Not now they don't, and they aren't."

Now that's a closer!

More notes from all over

our federally elected officials. A two-term presidency should be changed to a single six-year term. The two-term constitutional amendment was enacted during the Eisenhower Administration, pushed by Republicans who disliked the four-term election of Democrat Franklin Roosevelt. However, our government has become so self-serving that we must change the premise. In addition to one, six-year term for president, the two-year term for congressmen should be changed to four years with a maximum of 12 years. And senators should be elected for eight year terms, not to exceed 16 years. The present election cycle is not only inefficient, it also permits a greater concentration of power in the hands of a few. And while two-year terms for representatives reflect a common sense view that new faces provide turned representation, election turnover is, in fact, not that great in the House of Representatives.

Americans becoming afflicted with AIDS is growing fastest among the 16-25 year old age group; and is the leading cause of death for men ages 25-44. Talk to your children.

It has long been asserted by economists and others that America is becoming a service (as opposed to manufacturing) economy. According to the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, that day is already upon us, to wit: between 1993 and 1994, the labor force in Northeast PA grew by 4,600; employment grew by 8,600; unemployment dropped by 4,000; employment in manufacturing dropped by 400; employment in the wholesale and retail trades dropped by 2,900...and employment in the service trades increased by 4,800. Perhaps Generation X is right about "Mcjobs".

Many have seen the FBI wanted posters in post offices. Those

posters are inefficiently placed there. A much better place would be in doctor's office waiting rooms. There, patients would have hours to carefully study the photographs and information, and become intimately familiar with every minute detail of the poster.

As we review this year's Oscars, it's interesting, if not amusing, to recall the many celebrities who have appeared before various governmental committees since the celebrityawestruck Clinton administration took office. Next thing we'll see is an Oscar for "best supporting role before a subcommittee." Hollywood types would serve us much better by staying in Tinseltown. Washington is fantasyland enough.

While in filmland, isn't it ironic that nudity in movies causes a film to be rated "R", while horrific violence (so-called horror films being the prime example) receive a "PG". It's small wonder then that violence in this society has become casual...and that ignorance remains the watchword in human sexuality.

Televangelism has fallen on hard financial times, relatively speaking. While channel surfing, it has always been interesting to watch the weeping and wailing of the money grubbers. Great entertainment! That millions watch and contribute to such hucksterism also suggests that millions of Americans are disenchanted, need something to believe in, and are perfectly willing to share time and money for a daily dose of histrionics, hyperbole and tearful pleas to extract money for the privilege. Is it that the new electronic theology has risen to such heights, or that the mainline faiths have sunk to new lows? In any event, stay tuned. The buying and selling of souls will likely continue until some sanity finds its way back into the groping to understand, share and cope with the mysteries.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Apr. 12, 1935 COLONIAL INN UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

The Colonial Inn, one of the most delightful eating places in this section, will open under new management Saturday, Mrs. Grace Wiese Rhodes, the new proprietor announced yesterday. Mrs. Rhodes will cater especially to parties and banquets and will feature a special Sunday Night Dinner.

"When Worlds Collide" the serial now running in *The Post*, will be concluded next week and a new thrilling story will be announced.

You could get - Stewing oysters, 3 doz., 25¢; smoked hams 23¢ lb.; veal rumps, 23¢ lb.; Winesap apples, 6 lbs., 25¢; White House apple jelly 10¢ jar.

50 Years Ago - Apr. 6, 1945 RABIES SCARE: LOOSE DOGS WILL BE SHOT

Donald John Malkemes, serving with the 101st Infantry in the Yankee Division of General Patton's Third Army, is reported missing in action in Germany since March 16. Pvt. Malkemes was wounded in action in Luxembourg on Jan. 13. He was awarded the Purple Heart and went back into action during the early part of February.

State Health Officer John Q. Yaple, issued a warning to all dog owners that Luzerne County is now under strict quarantine against rabies. All dogs, whether licensed or not, must be kept on leash or under control at home. Dogs found roaming at large will be shot.

With generous offers of cooperation pouring in from a number of unexpected sources, Back Mountain Library Association will hold an important meeting tonight at Lundy's at 7:30. Results of recent interviews with applicants for the position of librarian and the recommendation for the election of one will be presented by the Librarian Committee.

40 Years Ago - Apr. 8, 1955 THIRD CALIFORNIA FRUIT MARKET OPENS

Justin Bergman Jr., Trucksville, president of Wyoming Valley Crippled Children's Association and chairman of 1955 Easter Seal Appeal, urges residents of the Back Mountain area to make their contributions to Easter Seals by Apr. 11. To date only a little over a half of the \$16,000 goal has been realized.

A new business enterprise opened in Dallas this week, the big new California Fruit Market on Memorial Highway opposite the entrance to Bloomsburg Mills. The market is the third operated by Philip Ansilio Sr. and his two sons, Thomas and Philip Jr.

"The Country Girl" with William Holden, Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly is now playing at the Dallas Outdoor Theatre.

30 Years Ago - Apr. 8, 1965 LAKE TWP. POLICE CHIEF RESIGNS

The handsome Highland Acres home of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Thomas, West Dallas, one of the show places of the Back Mountain, will soon pass to a new owner Richard Pearsall of Kingston and Craft Associates, has purchased the big home with its pleasant rolling fields, where well-bred Hampshire sheep and their lambs roamed the hilltop.

Lake Township Police Chief Edgar Hughes resigned at the Board of Supervisors meeting Saturday and recommended the board appoint Assistant Chief Wallbridge Leinthall to the post. The news hit the meeting like a bombshell and was totally unexpected. The letter of resignation simply stated "due to conditions" without stating the conditions.

Lake Township will circulate a petition among taxpayers to determine if the township wants to form its own planning commission to deal with zoning matters or abide by the county ordinance which is now in effect. Lake is one of the Back Mountain municipalities which is governed by county zoning law, not having formed its own zoning ordinance.

20 Years Ago - Apr. 10, 1975 TWO TOWNSHIPS ADOPT NEW ROADS

Glenview Avenue and portions of Aster Road and Forrester Drive in Appledwood Manor were opened as public roads by ordinances passed at Monday night's meeting of Dallas Township Board of Supervisors. Glenview Ave. was also adopted by a similar ordinance in Kingston Township and now becomes a boundary road between the two townships.